

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 6-7, 9, 16-18, 20-21, 23-26, 29-30, 32-33, 37 and 44-45 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 16, 18 and 20-21 are the independent claims. 1, 16, 18 and 20-21 are amended. Claims 3-5, 8, 10-15, 19, 22, 27-28, 31, 34-36, and 38-43 were previously cancelled. Claim 45 is the newly added claim. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgement and consideration of the drawings filed June 25, 2003.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgement and receipt of the certified priority documents.

Applicant's Filing of the Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

Upon review of the enclosed Amendment and discovery of any additional references after further search and/or consideration, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact Corey E. Smith, Reg. No. 57,807, to discuss the newly found references and/or possible claim amendments that may place the application in condition for Allowance.

Statement Under 37 C.F.R. §1.133(b)

In response to the telephonic interview conducted August 29, 2011, and the Interview Summary dated September 7, 2011, Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the interview. Applicant has reviewed the Interview Summary and has found it to be substantially accurate in describing the substance of the interview.

During the interview, proposed claims were presented to the Examiner. The Examiner indicated that the proposed claims overcome the rejections of record, and in particular overcome Laurin. Therefore, in this Response, Applicant amends the claims substantially in conformance with the proposed claims presented to the Examiner during the interview.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 – Sato in view of Kato, Hirayama and Laurin

Claims 1-2, 6-7, 9, 16-18, 20-21, 23-26, 29-30, 32-33, 37 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,884,004 (“Sato”) in view of U.S. [Publication 2002/0145702 (“Kato”), U.S. Patent 5,819,003 (“Hirayama”) and U.S. Publication 2003/0108164 (“Laurin”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to independent claim 1, Applicant amends the claim substantially in accordance with the proposed claims that were presented to the Examiner during the August 29, 2011 Examiner interview. In that interview, the Examiner agreed that the proposed amendments overcome the rejection of record, and in particular overcome Laurin.

With regard to independent claims 16, 18, 20 and 21, Applicant amends the claims similar to claim 1.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicant believes that independent claims 1, 16, 18, 20 and 21 are patentable. Due at least to the dependence of the remaining claims on the respective independent claims, Applicant asserts that the remaining claims are also patentable. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this art ground of rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

New Claims

Applicant adds new claim 45. Applicant asserts that claim 45 is patentable over any combination of Sato, Kato, Hirayama and Laurin.

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CONCLUSION

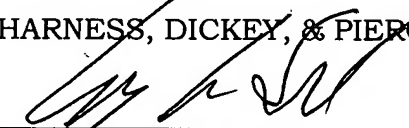
In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the rejections has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
HARNES, DICKY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By



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